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ABSTRACT

A study of Dogrib, an Athapascan language, focuses on long-distance agreement in the case of reflexives. While this "control" relationship has generally been considered in the context of infinitives, it is proposed that evidence from long distance agreement in Dogrib indicates that control is also relevant for languages without non-finite verb forms. It is also argued that control facts in Dogrib provide evidence for empty noun phrases, contrary to previous analysis. (MSE)

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CONTROL AND AGREEMENT IN DOGRIB

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1. Introduction

Consider the familiar long distance agreement facts of English sentences like (1) containing reflexives:

(1) The children promised me to wash themselves/*myself
John pretended to try to shave himself

Such examples provide part of the motivation for the postulation of an empty complement subject PRO marked with features of person, number and gender, at some level of structure--whether the D- or S-structure of Chomsky (1981) or the f-structure of Bresnan (1982). The relation between a matrix noun phrase and the empty complement subject PRO has been termed a relation of 'control', where 'control' is understood as the sharing of features between matrix and complement NPs as a result of the lexical specifications of a matrix verb. 'Control' thus allows a simple account of apparent long distance agreement: on the basis of the features of controlled PRO, the usual rules applicable to simple clauses determine the form of the reflexives found in the complex examples in (1).

'Control' has always been considered in the context of infinitives. I would like to show here that there is evidence from long distance agreement in the Athapaskan language Dogrib that 'control' is relevant also for languages without non-finite verb forms. I will also argue that the 'control' facts provide evidence for empty NPs in Dogrib, and against an analysis of agreement like that proposed by Hale (1983) for Warlpiri.

2. Some Dogrib facts

Before proceeding to details of the 'control' construction in Dogrib, let me make a few general observations about the language. Like other Athapaskan languages, it is SOV, and characterized by the possibility for 'null anaphora', a term I use theory-neutrally to describe the non-appearance of overt pronouns in ordinary, non-emphatic environments. Thus compare (2) and (3).

(2) John lidǐ whehtsı̨.
tea 3.PF.make
'John made tea'

(3) Whihtsı̨.
1s.PF.make
'I made it'

Verbs, postpositions, and nouns show agreement with their pronominal subjects, objects, and/or possessors. Third person subject

and direct object agreement is zero; otherwise agreement is marked by an overt prefix. The forms in (4) show first person singular agreement: in (4a), the verb agrees with a first singular subject; in (4b), with a first singular direct object. (4c) shows the postposition -ts'ǫ̀ 'to' inflected with first singular agreement, and (4d) shows the form of the noun mbeh 'knife' inflected for a first singular possessor.

(4) a. lídí ehdǫ́ 'I'm drinking tea'
b. nàsenɨ̀ɨ̀ht'ih 'he punched me'
c. sets'ǫ́ 'to me'
d. sembèè 'my knife'

Turning to matters more directly related to complementation and control, it is an important fact about Dogrib that it lacks uninflected verb forms, again like other Athapaskan languages, and like Modern Greek, for example. There does exist in Dogrib, however, something similar to the case of English verbs like promise or expect which select for either finite or non-finite complement clauses. The comparable verbs in Dogrib select for either indirect discourse or direct discourse complements. The construction that I will be concerned with in this paper centers on one of these verbs, so let me explain what I mean by indirect and direct discourse. Since I am concerned with pronouns and agreement here, the difference I focus on is that between English sentences like 'John said he was hungry', indirect discourse, and 'John said "I am hungry"', direct discourse.

The verb ts'eniwǫ 'want, think', like say, exhibits both indirect and direct discourse complements. The examples in (5) show indirect discourse. (Agreement markers are underscored.)

(5) a. [Sets'ǫ́ gogende ha] geniwǫ.
1s.to 3p.IMP.speak Fut 3p.IMP.want
'They want to talk to me'
'They want them to talk to me'

b. George [wekwɨ̀ghà k'ets'it'à] niwǫ.
3.hair one.OPT.cut 3.IMP.want
'George wants someone to cut his hair'

c. Violet [Jane negha ʔetàahti ha] niwǫ.
2s.for 3.IMP.interpret Fut 3.IMP.want
'Violet wants Jane to interpret for you'

In (5a), both the matrix verb geniwǫ and the complement verb gogende show the third person non-singular subject agreement morpheme ge-. Thus the sentence reads literally, they want, they are going to talk to me. As the gloss shows, the sentence is ambiguous on the indirect discourse interpretation: complement and matrix subjects may be interpreted as coreferential, or not. In the examples in (5b) and (5c), complement and matrix subjects are

not coreferential.

The next examples show direct discourse complements to ts'eniwǫ. In such sentences, a complement NP which is coreferential with the matrix subject of ts'eniwǫ is marked with first person agreement.

(6) a. [ɬdà ɬle] kǫ̀ geniwǫ.
1d.PF.survive Neg even 3p.IMP.want
'They don't even want to live'

b. [Narihtla] nǫǫwǫ ?
1s.OPT.go back 2s.IMP.want
'Do you want to leave for home?'

c. Phoebe [segha ʔetàats'ehti] niwǫ.
1s.for one.IMP.interpret 3.IMP.want
'Phoebe wants someone to interpret for her'

d. Joe [sembehchi̧ɬ seèhɬe ha] niwǫ.
1s.truck 1s.IMP.fix Fut 3.IMP.want
'Joe wants to fix his truck'

In (6a) the matrix verb shows third non-singular agreement in the form of the prefix ge-. The complement verb ɬdà, although it is understood as having a subject coreferential with the matrix subject, shows first person dual agreement, and by itself means 'we two have survived'. Thus the direct discourse complement in Dogrib recalls direct quotation in English. In (6b), first person subject agreement on the complement verb is understood as coreferential with a second person matrix subject. The sentence reads, literally, do you want, I shall leave for home? With (6c) and (6d), I show that not only subject agreement is involved in direct discourse interpretations. In (6c), the postposition -gha is inflected with first person agreement which is understood as coreferential with the third person matrix subject; in (6d), complement subject and possessor agreement is first person singular, referring to the subject Joe of the matrix clause.

It is important for what follows to note that each of the complement clauses enclosed in brackets in (5) and (6) can stand alone as a sentence. Thus the sentences in (7) and (8) corresponding to the complement clauses in (5) and (6) are all grammatical.

(7) a. Sets'ǫ̀ gogende ha. 'They are going to speak to me'
b. Wekwɬghà k'ets'it'à. 'Let someone cut his hair'
c. Jane negha ʔetàahti ha. 'Jane is going to interpret for you'

(8) a. ɬdà ɬle. 'We two have not survived'
b. Narihtla ? 'Shall I leave for home?'
c. Segha ʔetàats'ehti. 'Someone interprets for me'
d. Sembehchi̧ɬ seèhɬe ha. 'I'm going to fix my truck'

3. Control structures in Dogrib

There is one class of direct discourse sentences in Dogrib, however, whose complement clauses cannot stand alone as independent grammatical sentences. It is these examples which provide evidence for 'control', that is, the sharing of features between matrix and complement NPs. Thus I will be arguing that the verb ts'eniwǫ allows complements of three types, indirect discourse, direct discourse, and 'control' complements. We can compare the three complement types by examining the sentences in (9).

(9) a. [-control, -DD]
Joe ʔedembehchi̱ seèle ha niwǫ.
Refl.truck 3.IMP.fix

b. [-control, +DD] (=6d)
Joe sembehchi̱ seèhɬe ha niwǫ.
1s.truck 1s.IMP.fix

c. [+control, +DD]
Joe ʔedembehchi̱ seèhɬe ha niwǫ.
Refl.truck 1s.IMP.fix Fut 3.IMP.want

(all) 'Joe wants to fix his truck'

(9a) shows an example of an indirect discourse complement to ts'eniwǫ; (9b), an example, repeated from above, of a direct discourse complement; and (9c), an example of a control complement. Further examples of 'control' are shown in (10):

(10) a. Sedè [ʔedekwǐghà wehts'ǐ] niwǫ.
1s.sister Refl.hair 1s.OPT.comb 3s.IMP.want
'My sister wants to comb her hair'

b. Johnny [ʔededè -ts'àwehndǐ] niwǫ.
Refl.sister 1s.OPT.help 3.IMP.want
'Johnny wants to help his sister'

c. [Kwik'i ʔedekwi -ghàwehtı̨h] niwǫ.
gun Refl.grandchild 1s.OPT.give 3.IMP.want
'He wants to give the gun to his grandchild'

d. Sezha [ʔedı̨là -t'à ti wehdǫ] niwǫ.
1s.son Refl.hand by water 1s.OPT.drink 3.IMP.want
'My son wants to drink water from his hands'

These examples are like the direct discourse examples of (6) in that the embedded verb in each shows first person subject agreement which is interpreted as referring to the matrix subject. Each sentence in addition contains an object noun phrase marked with the reflexive possessive prefix ʔede-. This combination is extraordinary and, out of the context of the matrix verb ts'eniwǫ,

ungrammatical, as (11) shows for a representative pair of examples from (10):

(11) a. *?edekwǐghà wehts'ǐ (cf (10a))
(I shall comb my hair)

b. *?ededè -ts'àwehndǐ (cf (10b))
(I shall help my sister)

The ungrammaticality of the examples in (11) follows from the fact that ?ede- only occurs as a third person reflexive possessive prefix. Thus compare the examples in (12), which differ from those in (11) only in having third person subjects. These are grammatical.

(12) a. ?edekwǐghà wets'ǐ.
Refl.hair 3.OPT.comb
'She shall comb her hair'

b. ?ededè -ts'àwendǐ.
Refl.sister 3.OPT.help
'He shall help his sister'

The problem, then, is one of accounting for the third person reflexive forms in the complement clauses of (10) where the complements show first person subject agreement. We appear here to have a case of long distance agreement between a matrix subject and the reflexive object of the complement clause. For the English examples of apparent long distance agreement we were able to extend our account of the simple case of reflexives to cover the more complex examples of (1) by appealing to an analysis involving 'control', in which the antecedent for a reflexive is not an NP at some remove from the reflexive, but is instead a local subject NP PRO. This is just the approach I will take for Dogrib also, though doing so seems more difficult for Dogrib, since the NP subject that I claim is the reflexive antecedent, and 'controlled' by a matrix NP, is not the morphologically degenerate PRO but rather is represented by first person subject agreement on the embedded verb. Before considering a 'control' analysis of the Dogrib facts, however, I will consider other types of accounts in which the matrix subject, rather than the complement subject, is the local antecedent for the reflexive. That is, I will consider two analyses in which the reflexive NP is in the same domain as the matrix subject, and hence eligible for reflexivization by the usual mechanism. With the arguments in the next section I will show that, maintaining standard assumptions, the antecedent for the reflexives in (10) cannot be the matrix subject, but must be some element in the complement clause. I propose that a complement subject NP controlled by the matrix subject serves this function.

It is important to establish that reflexivization is clause-

bounded in Dogrib. Consider (13), then:

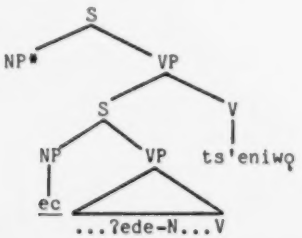
(13) *John [ʔededè -ts'àwhehtla] yek'èrèzhǫ.
Refl.sister 1s.PF.visit 3.IMP.know
(John knows that I visited his (own) sister)

(13) is ungrammatical, because the reflexive possessive and its antecedent John are not clause-mates. Thus, unless we stipulate that reflexivizaton is clause-bounded except in the case of examples like (10), we must find another account of the reflexive agreement in these sentences. Note that in the contrast between (10) and (13) we see a contrast between direct discourse and indirect discourse complements.

4. Evidence for control in Dogrib

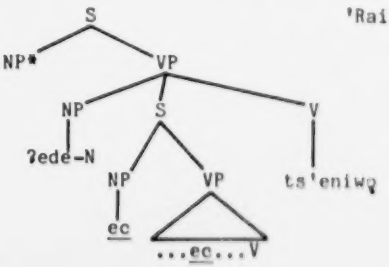
The structure for tne examples in (10) that I will be arguing for is that shown in (14A); it is also indicated by the bracketting of the sentences in (10). This structure I will call the 'control' structure.

(14A) 'Control'



I will be arguing against the structures in (14B) and (14C), which differ from (14A) in the position of the NP showing reflexive possessive agreement. (See (14C) on the next page.)

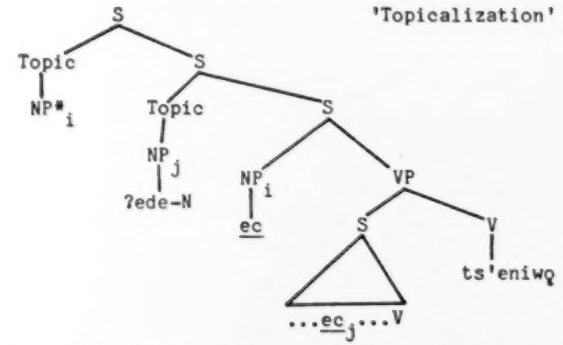
(14B) 'Raising'



In these structures, the matrix subject NP* and the NP showing reflexive possessive agreement are in the same syntactic domain, and the position corresponding to that held by the reflexive possessive in (14A) in the embedded clause is held instead by an

empty category (ec). (14B) is the 'raising' structure; (14C), the 'topicalization' structure. I choose to argue against these particular representations for two reasons. (14B), the raising representation, is a candidate to consider because it is a natural alternative to (14A) in the theory of government and binding that I assume. (14C), with topicalization, is a likely candidate to test given the importance of topicalization in Dogrib.

(14C)



The arguments below take the following form: if we take the standard view of (i) the interpretation of topics; (ii) the representations of reflexivization, raising and topicalization; and (iii) the interaction of morphology and syntax in Dogrib, the structures (14B) and (14C) for the sentences in (10) must be rejected.

4.1. A semantic argument against structure (14C) concerns the interpretation of sentences with topics. Topicalization in Dogrib is associated with certain types of interpretations of focus or contrast. With the examples in (10), however, no such special semantic interpretations are possible. Thus, if the examples in (10) receive a topicalization analysis, some special account for this fact must be stipulated. The analyses (14A) and (14B) would require no such stipulation.

4.2. (14B) and (14C) are proposed as attempts at providing representations for the sentences in (10) for which the standard reflexivization statement holds. The following ungrammatical strings show that even if we succeeded in this, we would find that the statement that would be needed for describing the 'raising' or 'topicalization' structures would be quite special and strange. Consider the examples in (15).

(15) a. *Johnny ?edekwîghà k'ets'it'à niwǫ.
Refl.hair one.OPT.cut 3.IMP.want
(Johnny wants someone to cut his hair)

b. *Sedǫǫ̀ ʔededè ɨ́hchih niwǫ.
1s.husband Refl.sister 2s.IMP.choose 3.IMP.want
(My husband wants you to choose his sister)

Comparing these ungrammatical examples with the grammatical sentences in (10), we find that they differ in the subject agreement found on the complement verbs: examples like (10) or (15) with reflexive possessives are only grammatical if the complement verb shows direct discourse first person subject agreement referring to a third person matrix subject, as in (10), but not (15). In order to account for these facts under the assumption that the standard process of reflexivization operates in the highest S, therefore, we need to state special conditions on the representations (14B) or (14C): these representations may serve as input to the reflexivization process only if the complement subject can be interpreted as coreferential with the matrix subject. Such global conditions on raising or topicalization are surely undesirable, if any other analysis is possible.

Under standard views of reflexivization, we do not expect anything in an embedded clause to affect reflexivization in the matrix clause. If we are to maintain this position, something special must be said about raising or topicalization under (14B) or (14C).

4.3. The final argument I will present against structures (14B) and (14C) depends on direct and oblique object facts in Dogrib. I will show that in order to maintain an important generalization about the interaction of morphology and syntax in Dogrib, the structure of the sentences in (10) must be taken to be as in (14A), with the reflexive possessive NP a constituent of the complement clause. Under this analysis, not only is the morphological generalization maintained, but there is no need to formulate special rules for raising or topicalization. The reflexive facts of (10) will be accounted for under an analysis involving control.

The--to my mind, decisive--evidence for the structure (14A) comes from examples like (10b) and (10c), which contain complement verbs which take oblique, as opposed to direct, objects. These two classes of verbs are distinguished by their patterns of pronominal third person object agreement. The contrast is exemplified in (16).

(16) a. ehtsɨ́ 'I'm making it'
1s.IMP.make

b. nàrehɬ́i 'I'm sewing it'
1s.IMP.sew

c. eh?ɨ́ 'I've seen it'
1s.PF.see

d. weghàlaehnda 'I'm working on it'
3.1s.IMP.work

e. weghàehnda 'I'm watching it'
3.1s.IMP.watch

f. wet'à?aht'į 'I'm using it'
3.1s.IMP.use

As (16a)-(16c) show, third person pronominal direct object agreement is zero.[2] Third person pronominal oblique object agreement, however, is marked by we-, as we see in (16d)-(16f). Note from (17) that the contrast is not seen when full NPs rather than pronouns serve as the objects of these verbs:

(17) a. Dii ?eh nàrehɬi.
this coat 1s.IMP.sew
'I'm sewing this coat'

b. Dii ?eh -t'à?aht'į.
1s.IMP.use
'I'm using this coat'

Crucially, however, the contrast does exist in the case of topicalized objects. Thus we find the contrast again in (18):

(18) a. Dii ?eh, nàrehɬi.
this coat 1s.IMP.sew
'This coat I'm sewing'

b. Dii ?eh, wet'à?aht'į.
3.1s.IMP.use
'This coat I'm using'

The generalization to make about (16)-(18) is that if the oblique object of a verb is an empty category rather than a lexical NP, oblique agreement shows up.

In the light of this statement, we can look again at (10b) and (10c). Both the verbs -ts'àts'endí 'help' and -ghàts'įtį 'give to keep' are verbs that take oblique objects, as (19) shows:

(19) a. *ts'àwehndí
Wets'àwehndí. 'I shall help her'

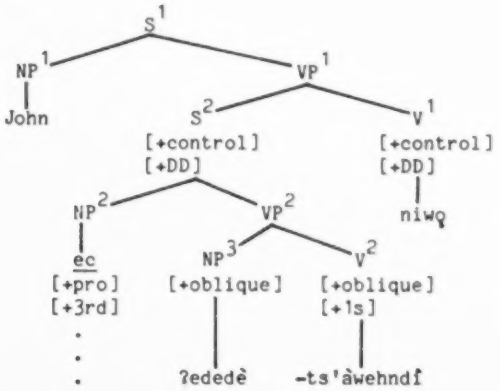
b. *kwik'i ghàwehtʃh
Kwik'i weghàwehtʃh. 'I shall give him the gun'

Thus, whether we assume the structure (14B) or (14C), we predict that the forms of the verbs to be found in (10b) and (10c) are wets'àwehndí and weghàwehtʃh. Since the objects of these verbs are empty categories, the oblique object agreement marker should

be present. This is not what we find. The morphological evidence of the sentences (10b) and (10c), therefore, leaves us little alternative to the structure (14A) for the sentences in (10).

5. To be very concrete, then, let me put forward the structure in (20) for (10b):

(20)



The lack of pronominal oblique object agreement on the verb -ts'àwehndí requires us to take the NP ʔededè$_2$ 'Refl sister' as a phrase-structure sister to the verb within VP^2; the third person reflexive possessive agreement on this NP requires us to understand the empty NP^2 as having a third person feature, despite the first singular agreement which shows up on the verb. The features [+control] and [+direct discourse] in the tree in (20) are the diacritics I will use to anchor the agreement facts. By the [+control] feature, the empty subject of S^2 assumes the features of John; by the [+direct discourse] feature, first person subject agreement in S^2 is understood relative to the domain of the matrix clause, that is, as direct discourse, rather than relative to the domain of the speech event.[3]

6. Conclusions

Stepping back from these technicalities, I would like to discuss two theoretical issues that the analysis I have presented bears on.

6.1. The first is the issue of empty categories. In some views of null anaphora, for example Hale's work on Warlpiri (Hale 1983), agreement has been to a greater or lesser extent identified with the null anaphor; that is, the two things have been considered one and the same. The Dogrib case is a clear instance where the empty category subject position cannot be considered identical with the agreement morpheme: as I hope I have shown, the grammatical features of the empty category subject in (20) are different from

the features of the agreement morpheme. I consider therefore that this case of 'control' in Dogrib constitutes strong evidence for the existence of 'real' empty NPs in this language, and evidence against an analysis of Dogrib null anaphora parallel to what Hale proposes for Warlpiri.

6.2. The second issue concerns the nature of 'control'. Previously, 'control' has been considered exclusively in relation to infinitival clauses. This circumstance probably follows from the fact that in languages with no infinitives, it is hard to distinguish what are possibly instances of 'control' from instances of coreference. In languages without infinitives, so it has seemed, contrasts parallel to that between the English sentences in (21) are difficult to come by.

(21) They promised me to wash themselves.
They promised me that they would wash themselves.

The Dogrib sentences in (10), unusual as they are, seem to provide some evidence that 'control' is a notion relevant even for languages without infinitives.

How does my use of the notion of 'control' correspond to a more usual understanding of this term? There are at least three important respects in which 'control' in Dogrib is like 'control' in, say, English. First, the possibility for 'control' is lexically determined by particular verbs. Further, verbs may optionally permit controlled complements; that is, besides verbs like <u>try</u> which require controlled complements, there are verbs like <u>promise</u> or <u>ts'eniwǫ</u> which permit them. Second, the controlled NP is an empty category which inherits grammatical features from its controller. And third, the controlled NP is a subject. It is an interesting question to ask whether this is a necessary property of 'control': given the interaction of the principles of government-binding theory that I assume, it seems to be a necessary property of 'control' in English. The answer is not so obvious for Dogrib, since in Dogrib, unlike English, other NPs besides subjects may be empty categories. Curiously, because evidence for 'control' distinct from direct discourse in Dogrib comes exclusively from reflexive facts, and only subjects are reflexive antecedents in this language, the only NPs we can <u>show</u> are controlled are subjects. Maybe this is enough for my case that 'control' in Dogrib is not so very different from 'control' in other languages.*

FOOTNOTES

1. The important feature of (14B) for our purposes is that the matrix NP* and the reflexive object <u>?ede-N</u> are clausemates. For expository purposes I have chosen the name 'the raising structure'

for the representation (14B). In fact, it is not important to my argument how (14B) is arrived at, or whether the structure is conceived of as analogous to the structure of 'raising' or of 'equi'.

A note on (14C): I am not concerned with what node dominates Topic.

2. Human pronominal direct objects may optionally be marked by we-.

3. It is possible that the features [+control, +DD] on the S^2 node in (20) are partially redundant, their presence being partially derivable from the impossibility of a complementizer in S^2. Koster (1984) proposes that the presence of a complementizer (or of an S'-node) blocks any 'control' relation between PRO and a controller, a relation he assimilates to the anaphor-antecedent relation of principle A of Chomsky's (1981) binding theory. Thus, for Koster, the possibility for the infinitival control or raising constructions in English or Dutch depends on the absence of a complementizer. This proposal finds strong confirmation in work by Grosu and Horvath (1984), who argue that in Rumanian, raising depends on just this condition. Interestingly, they report that raising is possible even out of finite clauses in Rumanian, provided the clause lacks a complementizer. This case of raising out of a finite clause in Rumanian then makes a striking parallel with the case of Dogrib 'control'. Significantly for Koster's proposal, Dogrib 'control' clauses also lack a complementizer, though I have to say, in other details the question of complementizers in Dogrib requires further study.

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